

In Appreciation of the Rev. Arthur F. Fruhling

(The time and place of birth into a family of nine and the listing of the members of the immediate family who survive him was first presented.)

Mr. Fruhling was ordained to the ministry of the Presbyterian Church by what was then the Presbytery of Oakland on April 11, 1909. After serving in Saulalito he came to Vacaville in the summer of 1913 and served as pastor of this church for about forty-three and a half years and for the last ~~six~~ years has been pastor-emeritus; so has given almost half a century of service to this community as a minister.

For much of this period, the church and community were small and there were many problems and discouragements. In spite of these problems, he gave wise leadership and was at the forefront of those who adventured in the development of programs that would make the service of the church more significant. He was a pioneer in Vacation School work and the hymn we heard earlier in the service was one of those that was frequently used in our vacation school programs and I am certain he must have used it is that way. He also pioneered in the use of movies in a church program and in a variety of other things that were evidence of a venturesome spirit.

My own acquaintance with Mr. Fruhling goes back to the early days of my ministry when I first met him. Our acquaintance ripened into friendship and in later years we enjoyed mutual friendship and appreciation. When I came here as pastor he welcomed my most cordially and in every way has been friendly and encouraging. He has been very much interested in all that has been going on, enthusiastic about progress and encouraging in all respects. And this is not easy. It is difficult for a minister after any period of service in a church to see some one else take over the pastoral care and leadership of the congregation. And this would be especially true after a long pastorate. But Art Fruhling has always been friendly and encouraging and has made the present pastorate to be a much more pleasant one because of his spirit.

It is interesting to note the breadth of interest that has been his. When he was a young man in Seminary he participated in activities that some people do not realize are in the scope of interest of theological students. He was an athlete and a member of a very good baseball team. He was also musical and belonged to a fine quartet. This athletic and musical ability and interest have been passed on to the next generation and when these children participate in athletic and musical affairs, they are carrying on in part the life and interest of Arthur F. Fruhling.

Mr. Fruhling was always a scholar and until the end was alert to discover truth by his reading and seeking to know the thinking of others. This is illustrated by his appreciation for a recent book "You and The Universe" in which the scientist writer attempts to show the unity of purpose running through both animate and inanimate life. A verse from Walt Whitmen interspersed within this work catches some of this spirit of investigation.

He was a humble man and did not feel he merited recognition and appreciation such as the Rotary Club showed for him in a meeting last spring. He even at times felt himself to be a failure but the kind of life he lived in losing himself in the service of others is not failure but success in the eyes of God and those who learn to think His thoughts.

Arthur Fruhling might have become a great professor because he was a fine student, or he might have achieved more recognition in some other type of service; but he chose to invest his life in this community and was faithful to the demands upon it during this long period of time. He had courage as shown on the occasion of which I have heard a number of times when he defied a mob that was bent on trouble and was able to quiet an emotionally upset throng that might have wrought destruction of life and property.

When he presented his resignation to Presbytery one of his contemporaries - who had studied Hebrew under him in Seminary when Art was the Hebrew tutor - spoke of his fidelity. This man had served large churches in Pennsylvania and in California and he spoke of how there are many of us who feel it necessary to go here and there to carry on our ministry in the church. But he said, probably Art Fruhling had chosen the better part with the investment of his life in one community for a prolonged period.

Here Mr. Fruhling baptised, married, buried, counselled and ministered in a great variety of ways, not only to you who are here today but to many others, some of whom have preceded him in the completion of this earthly journey. The results cannot be measured but will provide the basis for our living and our gratitude during the years ahead as in the past. We will be grateful to have known and been influenced by him. It has been only in the past couple of years since the emotional strain was too great that he asked to be relieved from further participation in such pastoral responsibilities.

So if in these fifty years Art Fruhling has helped some of you or some of the others to find an objective in life, if he has helped some one to understand something of the meaning of life, if he has helped some to discover God in a way that is meaningful and gives added significance to life; if he has been of help in any way to people who have come under the scope of his influence then he would be happy; for his life was invested in service and not in self seeking. In what has come into the lives of others through his ministry he receives his reward.

So also his life speaks to us of that faith which is not only adequate for this world and its problems but that gives us an assurance of new adventure into truth with God unencumbered by the imitations and frustrations of this life. The beauty of that new adventure into which he has now entered is expressed by John in these words in the Book of the Revelation:

"They shall hunger no more neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them or any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feel them, and shall lead them into living fountains of waters. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away.

And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and the Lamb shall be in it; and His servants shall serve Him and they shall see His face; and His name shall be on their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of sun; for the Lord God giveth them light; and they shall reign for ever and ever".

And the words of Jesus himself: "Let not your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me. I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by me. Peace I leave with you my peace I give unto you; Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

The Rev. Henry B. MacFadden